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ABSTRACT

Efforts to train graduate student instructors (GSIs) at the University of California, Berkeley, are considered in this newsletter issue. Administrative changes and ways to improve GSI selection, training, and evaluation are considered, along with: proposed changes in graduate student teaching titles, grants to help faculty and departments undertake a variety of training activities; services of the newly-created Office of Educational Development; a campus-wide orientation conference; specialized departmental orientations; GSI handbooks; departmental and campus workshops to provide GSIs support and information; advice offered by faculty members on working with GSIs; methods for providing comprehensive training; special problems faced by GSIs who learned English as a second language; assuring consistency in grading; tips for faculty, departments, and GSIs; resources for foreign TAs to improve spoken English and assist in teaching American students; the goals, formats, and instructional methods of courses required for TAs; videotaping; faculty members who have received grants to improve teaching and learning; and a program to recognize outstanding contributions by GSIs. (SW)

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[TRAINING GRADUATE STUDENT INSTRUCTORS]

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The materials in the Special Collection on the Training of Teaching Assistants were developed through the active efforts of numerous educators who first met at the 1986 National Conference on the Institutional Responsibilities and Responses in the Employment and Education of Teaching Assistants held at the Ohio State University. Assisted by more than 80 individuals, the committee chairs listed below were able to establish the collection which will be developed and maintained by the ERIC Clearinghouse for Higher Education. This arrangement will enable faculty members, faculty developers, administrators, TA supervisors, and graduate teaching assistants to have access to TA training materials produced by institutions across the nation.

Task Force on Establishing a National Clearinghouse of Materials Developed for TA Training

Chair: Jody Nyquist, University of Washington

Subcommittees

ERIC Collection Committee-	Chair: Margaret Pryately University of Oklahoma
Council of Graduate Deans Clearinghouse -	Chair: Sheila Caskey Southeast Missouri State University
Exploration of a Review Process -	Chair: Lynda Morton University of Missouri

ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education - Marilyn Shorr

Clearinghouse on ITA Materials - Janet Constantinides

TEACHING AT BERKELEY

FALL 1985 UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY NUMBER 18

In This Issue: Training Graduate Student Instructors

This issue of *Teaching at Berkeley* describes departmental and campus-wide efforts to train and guide Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs).

Page one highlights administrative changes and grant opportunities. A recent task force report identified needed improvements in selecting, training and evaluating GSIs. Their recommendations are summarized here. Proposed changes in graduate student teaching titles are discussed in another article. To help faculty and departments undertake a variety of training activities, the campus makes available special grants; information on this grant program is presented below. Finally, page one describes the newly-created Office of Educational Development (publisher of this newsletter) and outlines the services we provide.

Page two offers insights into an initial training step: the orientation. Articles describe both the general campus-wide Orientation Conference sponsored by the Graduate Assembly each fall as well as more specialized departmental orientations. In addition to conferences and meetings, handbooks can help prepare GSIs for teaching; page two discusses such materials developed both by departments and the Graduate Assembly.

As GSIs practice their new craft, problems inevitably occur. To provide GSIs with both support and information, many departments have designed short-term workshops. Articles on page three describe departmental and campus-wide workshops on a range of topics.

On pages four and five, experienced faculty members offer advice on working with GSIs: methods for providing comprehensive training; special problems faced by GSIs who learned English as a second language, and assuring consistency in grading. Of special interest are three articles describing good practices and offering tips for faculty, departments and GSIs. Foreign TAs will also find a listing of resources to improve their spoken English and to assist them in teaching American students.

Many departments recognize the need for permanent, long-term GSI training. Various 300-level courses and seminars are offered each semester, many as required components of TA training. Faculty members who teach these courses describe their goals, formats and instructional methods on pages six and seven. Videotaping, often a major component of these courses, is discussed in several articles.

Finally, page eight lists the names of faculty members who have received grants to improve teaching and learning. This page also describes a program to recognize outstanding contributions by GSIs.

Report Cites Areas For Improvement

Each year nearly 1800 Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) at Berkeley make major contributions to teaching, particularly at the freshman and sophomore levels. For a number of years the policies and procedures relating to these GSIs have been unclear; administrative channels have been diverse and poorly defined; criteria and resources for appointment, training, and supervision of GSIs have been uneven or undeveloped.

To help improve current practices, a Committee on Graduate Student Instructors (COGSI) was established in 1983-84 by Vice Chancellor for Undergraduate Affairs, W. M. Laetsch, at the request of the Vice Chancellor Roderic B. Park. The charge of the committee was to examine current procedures and recommend areas for improvement.

Members of COGSI included Professor William Bade (Mathematics), Dr. Barbara G. Davis (Office of Educational Development), Professor Hugh Richmond (English, and Chair of COGSI), Dr. Kurt Lauridsen (Student Learning Center), Ms. Mary Patterson (Graduate Assembly), Professor Hanna Pitkin (Political Science), Professor Herbert Strauss (Chemistry), Professor Marvalee Wake (Zoology), and Professor David Wood (Entomology and Parasitology and Associate Dean of the Graduate Division).

The Committee delivered its report in fall 1984, and its recommendations are being reviewed by the Academic Senate and the Administration.

In its report, the Committee recommends clarifying and strengthening policy-making and administrative networks at all levels, increasing resources for training, encouraging departments to achieve the best procedures for their GSIs, and assuring advanced assignment to departments of sufficient GSI positions to meet teaching needs.

Specifically, the Committee recommends that the Administration identify one senior administrator with general oversight for GSI affairs; at present there is no one authorized to coordinate policy. This officer would be assisted by a committee of faculty and staff members, appointed in consultation with the Academic Senate, who are experienced in training and supervising GSIs. In addition, the report recommends that every department with GSIs identify a faculty member or administrative position to develop formal policy and procedures for their GSIs.

The report stresses that departments must ensure that GSIs have mastery of subject matter relevant to their appointment, and that GSIs who are not native English speakers have adequate skills in writing and speaking English. Testing and remedial programs should be provided and required when necessary. Adequate orientation, training, and in-service supervision should be established by using both departmental resources and campus support units.

To carry out these recommendations, the report urges that the Administration increase funding for departmental and campus-wide programs.

The report recommends regular communication among those concerned with GSIs, such as an annual conference of departmental officers to develop policy and improve procedures. This conference would be planned by the GSI committee and presided over by the relevant administrative officer.

To improve the use of GSI appointments, the report concludes, the principal need is for firm leadership; systematic consultation at all levels; adequate support of departmental and central programs; and reinforcements of faculty involvement. Copies of the report are available from the Office of Educational Development, 273 Stephens, 2-6392.

Funding For The Future: Grants Promote GSI Training

If you have an idea for improving Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) training in your department, grants are available to help you carry out your project.

These special funds can be used to develop orientation workshops, offer seminars or courses, prepare handbooks or resource files, or undertake other activities that improve the selection, training and guidance of GSIs.

Awards range between $250 and $9000. Last year's average grant was approximately $3,275. While the grants cannot be used to fund GSI positions, the Committee will review proposals aimed at any aspect of GSI development or training. Aside from the activities listed above, potential projects might include hiring a GSI to serve as a Master TA or purchasing audiovisual materials to be used in GSI training.

Unacceptable proposals include requests for a faculty member's summer salary, one-time activities (e.g., guest speakers or film rentals), or major equipment purchases.

Applications will be assessed in terms of the proposal's campus-wide impact, the number of GSIs who will benefit, the expected short-term impact on the quality of GSI instruction, and the likelihood of adoption or future funding by the department.

In 1984-85, 18 of 23 applications (78%) received some or all of the funding requested. To apply for a grant, an application form, available from the Office of Educational Development (273 Stephens; 2-6392), must be completed and submitted by **April 11, 1986.**

For further information, lists of funded projects, or assistance in developing a proposal, please contact the Office of Educational Development.

OED: Options For Educational Development

Need advice on ways to improve your courses? Wondering how to strengthen students' writing and speech skills? Seeking suggestions for working effectively with Graduate Student Instructors?

The Office of Educational Development (formerly called TIES, Instructional Improvement Support Services) can answer these and other questions to help faculty members evaluate and improve their courses and curricula.

Among its activities, the office administers several Academic Senate grant and award programs to recognize and improve teaching and learning. The *Council on Educational Development* provides grants, from over one-thousand to several thousand dollars, that are typically used to prepare new courses, plan and improve departmental curricula, and test and develop new modes of instruction. The Council also awards instructional travel grants to support faculty members' participation in professional meetings and conferences concerned with the improvement of undergraduate and graduate education. The *Committee on Teaching* provides modest funds (no more than $1000) for improving existing courses, developing new courses, evaluating instruction, or assessing curricular needs. Grants to strengthen the selection, guidance and training of Graduate Student Instructors are also available. Through its award programs, the Committee on Teaching recognizes Distinguished Teachers and Outstanding Teaching Assistants and Teaching Associates.

The Office of Educational Development also produces *Teaching at Berkeley* and other publications, consults with faculty members about design and evaluation of instruction, offers workshops and presentations on aspects of teaching and learning, works closely with the Academic Senate Committee on Teaching and Council on Educational Development on special initiatives, and provides assistance to other units and groups working to improve instruction.

Beginning this year, a Writing and Speech Coordinator will offer advice and assistance to faculty members who wish to improve their students' competency in these areas. The new Coordinator, Stephen K. Tollefson, a lecturer in Subject A and a recipient of the Distinguished Teaching Award, will be available to consult with faculty members and Graduate Student Instructors. Activities planned for this year include compiling information about campus writing and speech topics, and preparing instructional and curricular materials.

If you would like more information about these activities or a brochure describing the office's services, contact the Office of Educational Development (Barbara G. Davis, Director), 273 Stephens Hall, 642-6392.

Change Proposed in Graduate Student Teaching Titles

Roderic B. Park, The Vice Chancellor, issued a memo on June 25, 1985 proposing that the titles Teaching Assistant, Teaching Fellow and Teaching Associate (Student) be replaced by the single title Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) as of July 1, 1985, and that the use of the title Acting Instructor to appoint continuing graduate students be discontinued.

In describing this proposed change, Vice Chancellor Park singled out four established principles that had been weakened in some instances over the years. He noted that a) training and experience in teaching are viewed by the University as an integral part of graduate education for most graduate students, b) that, therefore, student teaching titles should be reserved for registered graduate students, c) that student teaching appointments should, insofar as is possible, involve increased responsibility with increasing experience, and d) that such appointments should continue to be limited to a total of four academic years in order to make appointments available to as many graduate students as possible. The proposed change in titles is the first step in assuring that future teacher trainee positions are in closer conformity with the University's educational goals.

During 1985-86 the Graduate Division and the Administration, with the advice and assistance of the Graduate Council and the Graduate Assembly, will be examining intensively the area of graduate student teaching and research appointments with a view to developing a structure and system that effectively carry out the goals of graduate education on the campus.

The new Graduate Student Instructor title comprises four levels and a four step salary scale which corresponds closely to the present salary scales in use for graduate student appointments. Advancement within range will be dependent upon academic performance, progress toward degree, teaching experience, and level of responsibility in the teaching program. Standards for advancement will be established by individual departments and programs within guidelines set by the University. GSI appointments will be limited to eight regular academic semesters in total, although some exceptional appointments beyond that period may, as at present, be approved.

Vice Chancellor Park's memo described this change as a trial measure and called for comment from interested parties. Concerns over the change have been directed to the Vice Chancellor's office and are being taken under advisement.

Further revisions and more detailed procedures will be forthcoming as the campus Administration and the Graduate Division continue their study of graduate student teaching and research appointments.

Orientations

GSIs In Their Element: Chem Program Catalyst For Effective Teaching

Marjorie Faltens, LECTURER
CHEMISTRY

Each year over one hundred new graduate students enter the UC Berkeley Chemistry Department, all of whom will serve as teaching assistants during their first semester. For many this will be their first teaching experience. These new Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) will serve in about eleven different courses, teaching approximately 2200 freshmen and 1500 sophomores. Most chemistry graduate students will work as TAs for three semesters, and many will continue in academic careers. During the first term of teaching, TAs often have many unanswered questions about teaching and are receptive to suggestions and guidance concerning their teaching duties and new ideas for experimentation in teaching. Therefore, the Chemistry Department believes it is valuable to help TAs establish a good teaching pattern early, a pattern which they can follow in their subsequent teaching assignments.

Prospective Chemistry GSIs put their enzymes to work during orientation activities in Latimer Hall

During the week before the beginning of fall term, all incoming chemistry graduate students attend a compulsory one-day orientation in which the new graduate student instructors are trained by eighteen to twenty experienced GSIs. Two to four faculty members usually participate in the orientation as well.

Each participant receives the *Chemistry TA Handbook* and the agenda for the day. After a brief introduction, the participants are divided into groups of eight to ten students and sent to the instructional lab rooms where most of the training activities take place. These are the rooms where the graduate students themselves will eventually be teaching. Each small group is led by two experienced TAs who cover various aspects of teaching including: first teaching day activities; safety equipment and use; and teaching a lesson.

These discussions are augmented by hands-on demonstrations with laboratory safety equipment. In the past, videotape presentations have also been used for this purpose. The leaders, who are briefed earlier in the week, are given a structured agenda to follow but are allowed flexibility in their presentation.

At the conclusion of the workshop, the trainers and participants relax during an informal discussion session. Faculty members who will be teaching during the fall term are invited to join the group. The highlight of the day is a slide presentation session depicting various aspects of the chemistry graduate student's existence and glimpses into the lives of the faculty members when they are not doing chemistry.

The success of our orientation workshop can be attributed to careful planning, preliminary hard work and the cooperation of the trainers. Our department is fortunate to have experienced GSIs who are willing to give much of their time, creativity and energy to help make our workshops effective. Each year, our TAs volunteer in greater numbers than we need. The TA trainers who help conduct the fall workshops get no monetary remuneration for their time and help. However, we have traditionally invited them to a dinner to show our appreciation.

For the past two years, the orientation workshops have been funded by the Department of Chemistry. Last year the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors (COGSI) provided some funding to pay the salaries of supervising head TAs. COGSI will be funding two-thirds of the Chemistry Department's 1985-86 TA-training programs.

GA Gives TAs Good Advice

As graduate students embark on their teaching careers at Berkeley, they can turn to a number of sources for information and advice. A useful resource is the Graduate Assembly TA Training Project which is available to assist departments, faculty, and graduate students throughout the campus in their training efforts. The TA Training Project is devoted solely to the training of Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs). The project's annual TA Training Conference provides new and experienced GSIs with opportunities to develop skills, explore teaching techniques and identify resources available on campus. The TA Training Project also produces a handbook for GSIs and will publish a special handbook for foreign TAs this fall. A newsletter for GSIs is currently being planned for the 1985-86 academic year. All publications are available to members of the campus community free-of-charge.

During the year, the project sponsors a series of workshops that offer advice on instructional matters as well as other issues of concern to GSIs. In addition, staff members of the project advise and collaborate with faculty and graduate students in individual departments in implementing training programs. Finally, the project serves as a campus-wide clearinghouse for information on TA training issues by conducting on-campus surveys and communicating with training programs at other colleges and universities.

For more information, contact the TA Training Project, Anthony Hall, 2-2175.

GA Orientation Conference

Robby Cohen, TA PROJECT COORDINATOR

To help teaching assistants prepare for their instructional duties the Graduate Assembly holds an annual TA Training Conference just prior to the commencement of the academic year. This conference is campus-wide and is the single largest TA training event at UC Berkeley. Over 400 TAs from almost all departments typically attend the conference.

Conferences begin with a plenary session and an address by a faculty member, orienting TAs to their role and responsibilities in undergraduate education. Past speakers have included Professors Richard Sutch (Economics) and Steve Selvin (Public Health). Following the plenary sessions, participants regroup into workshops led by experienced TAs and faculty, which provide new TAs with practical advice on how to teach effectively.

Workshops are divided into discipline specific subjects and topics addressing campus-wide instructional concerns. The discipline specific workshops allow TAs in science, humanities, and social science to deal with the special teaching problems which occur in their own fields. The more general workshops, such as "teaching your first class," "overcoming grading problems," "how to facilitate discussions" bring TAs from all the disciplines together — encouraging a fruitful exchange of ideas on teaching methods.

Workshops address not only conventional pedagogical problems, but also the complex array of cultural, social and employment issues which confront TAs at UC Berkeley. Included are discussions of foreign TA problems, establishing a classroom climate free from racial and sexual prejudice, and TA rights and obligations as employees.

Last year's most popular new workshop offered TAs the opportunity to hear the undergraduate view. The two upper division workshop leaders had surveyed undergraduates in many disciplines and explained the best and worst TA teaching practices from their perspectives.

Photo by Daniele Spellman

A bird's eye view of the Pelican Building, the home of the Graduate Assembly — a useful resource for teaching assistants

At the conference TAs are introduced to the educational resources on campus which offer assistance in teaching and advising undergraduates. This introduction is provided through exhibits which are set up by representatives from the library system, the Student Learning Center, the Office of Educational Development, the Counseling Center and other instructional support units.

Although conference evaluations reveal that graduate student instructors from all levels find the sessions helpful, novice TAs who always make up the majority of conference participants are most appreciative of the training. These inexperienced TAs, who often enter their first semester of teaching with little understanding of instructional problems and methods, find the practical teaching tips offered by veteran TAs and faculty a critical first step in learning to teach.

GSIs Learn By The Book

A useful means for orienting Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) to their instructional responsibilities is through a handbook. This form allows for the compilation of essential information in a format that can be easily retained by GSIs. When necessary, handbooks can be updated and revised to include new ideas or new procedures.

At the campus-wide level, the Graduate Assembly TA Training Project's handbook, *Learning to Teach*, provides pertinent information to teaching assistants in a variety of disciplines. The handbook, available to members of the campus community without charge, acquaints TAs with the instructional problems commonly encountered at the university, and offers practical advice on how to resolve them.

Most of the articles in the handbook are written by experienced teaching assistants, as this is the group most familiar with the special teaching problems confronting TAs. The book begins by explaining the initial teaching concerns which TAs encounter at the beginning of the semester: how to prepare for and conduct the first class, what to expect from undergraduate students and how to approach the problem of motivating them. The handbook also offers a chapter on teaching strategies appropriate in different disciplines, including articles from TAs in the sciences, humanities and social sciences. The troublesome problems which arise in grading undergraduate work are explored in the book, as are the teaching methods needed to lead meaningful and lively discussions in class. Finally, the handbook provides detailed information on course administration and procedures, instructional resources, financial assistance and employment matters.

The Graduate Assembly will be distributing the handbooks to departments during the first week of classes. If your department is in need of handbooks please contact the TA Training Project, Anthony Hall, 2-2175.

Several departments have also developed handbooks as a way to address the teaching concerns of a particular discipline and to discuss specific administrative and departmental procedures. Such handbooks exist for GSIs in the departments of History, Chemistry, and Economics, for example. The English Department has produced a handbook specifically for instructors in the 1A-1B series. The Mathematics Department provides its GSIs with a pamphlet entitled *Chalking It Up* (Random House/Birkhauser Series). These departmental handbooks focus on a number of similar topics, including such issues as administering assignments; grading; the first day of class; and how to conduct an effective discussion. Each handbook, however, also looks at the specific concerns and problems encountered in the particular discipline, e.g., laboratory safety, using the blackboard to explain problems, and helping students write an essay.

Departments that are interested in developing a handbook for their GSIs can apply for a grant from the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors. Contact the Office of Educational Development (273 Stephens Hall; 2-6392) for more information.

Workshops

Something For Everyone: Campus Offers GSI Workshops

Several campus units offer short-term workshops for GSIs that can supplement a department's training activities. These workshops can help GSIs improve their teaching effectiveness, review student exams and papers more effectively, and handle a variety of classroom situations and problems. Workshop seekers can turn to:

- The Bay Area Writing Project
  5635 Tolman Hall
  Contact: James Gray, 2-0963

GSIs can enroll in workshops and courses related to the teaching of writing offered by the Bay Area Writing Project. The project can also arrange classes for interested GSIs and departments.

- The Counseling Center
  Building T-5
  Contact: Jane Moorman, 2-2366

The Counseling and Psychological Services (CPS) units (Psychiatry, Counseling and Student Advising) do outreach with GSIs around specific teaching concerns at the request of academic departments and the Graduate Assembly.

- The Disabled Students' Program
  2515 Channing Way
  Contact: Sharon Bonney, 2-0518

Workshops, as well as printed materials and private consultations, are offered to GSIs interested in providing academic accommodation for disabled students in related course activities.

- The Office of Educational Development
  273 Stephens Hall
  Contact: Stephen Tollefson, 2-6392

Since writing and speaking are two skills that cross all course boundaries, the OED provides workshops, videotapes, and private consultations to help GSIs learn more about how to encourage, respond to, and finally evaluate students' writing and speaking. Workshops focus on the individual subject areas of GSIs, drawing on their own students' work and on expectations and opportunities for writing and speaking in a given discipline. Participants will discuss how grammar, organization, development, and style affect the content of a particular piece of work.

- Graduate Assembly
  TA Training Project
  Anthony Hall
  Contact: Robby Cohen, 2-2877

In addition to the orientation conference, TA handbook, and other related services for Graduate Student Instructors, the TA Training Project of the Graduate Assembly offers a series of workshops each semester, addressing a variety of issues that confront GSIs. These workshops are designed by TAs — with faculty assistance — and provide practical advice on teaching and the educational process. The GA has also held a number of workshops focusing on problems of racism, sexism and GSI overwork. In addition, several workshops each semester focus on specific problems confronting GSIs in the different disciplines. Included in last semester's workshops were such topics as: Teaching in the Physical Sciences; A Workshop for Foreign TAs; Race and Education at UC Berkeley; and TA Employment Problems.

Photo by Kate Caldwell

Participants in Graduate Assembly TA workshop ponder pedagogical problems

- The Student Learning Center
  Building T-8
  Contact: Ronald P. Drucker, 2-7332 or 2-0982

Workshops show participating GSIs how to teach specific skills in writing and critical reading in the course of classroom instruction. The one-hour long presentations, which are tailored to the needs of participating GSIs, cover such topics as: Where and How to Intervene in the Writing Process; Establishing Guidelines for Student Papers; Leading a Discussion Group; Making an Essay Assignment Work; Evaluating Student Papers; Responding to Students for Whom English is a Second Language; and Learning From Texts.

- Subject A
  216 Dwinelle Annex
  Contact: Kim Davis, 2-5570

Senior Subject A staff conduct workshops on writing evaluation and instruction as a part of the course work in a variety of disciplines. Departments and GSIs should consult with Subject A at least two weeks in advance so that workshops may be designed for the specific course.

Percentage† of departments requiring orientations, workshops, consultations, and courses:

	Large Departments (Appointing more than 15 TAs; n = 20)	Small Departments (n = 46)
TAs are required to:		
• Attend departmental orientation session	70%	35%
• Consult with professor/master TA about teaching	55%	81%
• Enroll in 300-level course	45%	26%
• Read departmental handbook, files, materials	35%	33%
• Attend departmental workshops, meetings, seminars	30%	42%

†*From UCB Report on Graduate Student Instructors, 1984*

Econ Grad Students Profit From Training

Laura Tyson, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
ECONOMICS

During the summer of 1980, the Economics Department initiated a Training Program for Graduate Student Instructors. The program has run consecutively for five years, funded in part by a grant from the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors and in part by the department itself. During this period the department has appointed an average of about seventy of its graduate students each academic year as teaching assistants or associates, mainly in large undergraduate lecture courses. As a result of heavy enrollment demand in undergraduate Economics courses, the department has generally been able to hire all of its graduate students seeking a teaching position and has occasionally hired qualified students from other departments as well.

At the beginning of each academic year, approximately one-half of the students hired as GSIs have no previous teaching experience; they are assigned to serve in Economics 1, the introductory undergraduate course in economics. A primary objective of the department's training program is to provide these inexperienced GSIs with a basic understanding of their responsibilities and some of the problems frequently encountered in Economics 1.

Since its inception, the training program has had two main features: annual workshops on topics relevant to the tasks of economics teaching assistants; and a reference handbook that summarizes and elaborates on these topics. The main topics covered in both the workshop and handbook have included: the role and responsibilities of the Graduate Student Instructor in economics; construction and grading of problem sets and examinations; the prevention and handling of cheating; how to conduct office hours; GSI/student support; lecturing and discussion techniques; and administrative details specific to the Economics Department. Both the workshops and the handbook have been designed to complement the content of the Graduate Assembly TA Training Project in which economics teaching assistants have been encouraged to participate.

Each year the information presented in the workshops and handbook is revised to reflect changes in both University and departmental procedures. For example, this year the handbook will be revised to explain the new ACE procedures and associated GSI responsibilities and the new computerized grading procedure adopted in Economics 1.

A final aspect of our training efforts is evaluation. Each semester, the department administers formal GSI evaluations which are examined by the Department's Vice-chair in charge of GSI training. Those students encountering teaching difficulties are advised about methods for improving teaching. To encourage and acknowledge excellence in graduate student instruction the department recommends students with outstanding teaching records for the University's award for distinguished teaching by Teaching Assistants and Associates.

Poli Sci Elects Training Program For New Term

Jack Citrin, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
POLITICAL SCIENCE

In the course of a year, 100 teaching assistants and readers are employed in several lower-division and upper-division Political Science courses. Unfortunately, most of the graduate students appointed to these positions for the first time have no teaching experience or knowledge of the administrative and educational context relevant to Berkeley undergraduates. Our faculty have recognized that more systematic attention toward TA training would contribute to the quality of undergraduate education as well as to the professional training of graduate students.

"Our faculty have recognized that more systematic attention toward TA training would contribute to the quality of undergraduate education as well as to the professional training of graduate students."

Jack Citrin, *Associate Professor, Political Science*

As a result, in 1984-85, the Political Science Department appointed a TA resource person on an experimental basis. Christine Schoefer, a graduate student and teaching assistant herself, acted in this capacity. Ms. Schoefer, aided in part by myself, held TA training workshops, met with individual Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs), and conducted research to assess the need for continuing a formal TA training project within the department.

In conducting workshops, we have found that some sessions must be generic, i.e., of relevance to all GSIs no matter what courses they teach, while some sessions must also address the special problems of particular courses. At the general level, workshops can be devoted to: the role and responsibility of the TA; the first day of class; conducting discussion sessions; teaching critical reading, writing, and thinking; and grading papers and exams. Moreover, we believe it is important to address specific types of TA/student interactions with particular attention to classroom problems that arise in dealing with students of diverse levels of preparation and a range of backgrounds.

We have also found it useful to direct workshops at particular political science issues, e.g., political theory or methodology, using faculty and experienced GSIs as guest lecturers. These workshops are most valuable for first-time TAs when offered at the beginning of the semester.

While these training workshops can be extremely beneficial to Graduate Student Instructors, it is also essential for GSIs to discuss issues raised in these workshops with faculty or experienced TAs so that new instructors can benefit from others' comments and feedback. Thus, in addition to the workshops, we plan to offer in 1985-86 two general consulting sessions each semester. One will be a question-and-answer session for all GSIs and the faculty members with whom they will be working. This will provide an opportunity to discuss general issues about teaching. Another general session, at which opinions and suggestions from undergraduates will be solicited, is also scheduled. The results of these meetings will be summarized in writing and distributed to graduate students.

Using funds from a grant awarded by the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors, and based on the success of Ms. Schoefer's work this past year, we plan to expand the TA training program in the Political Science Department in 1985-86. Not only will we offer the above-described workshops and consultation sessions, but we will also prepare a handbook for TAs and examine the possibility of more formalized evaluation procedures at the end of the semester.

Working With Graduate Students

Nouvelle Methods For French TAs

Gerard Jian, SENIOR LECTURER
FRENCH

When the Chairman of the French Department invited me to Berkeley in 1965, he handed me a copy of *The Slate*, the student course advisory for incoming freshmen. Sharply critical, *The Slate* unequivocally urged students to avoid the French Department citing lack of direction, training, and poor teaching ability among the teaching assistants. The chairman challenged me to change this sad situation. I answered that with the full backing of the department, I could try.

When I arrived at Berkeley, I found that lower-division French courses were entrusted to the newest assistant professor who often viewed the task as an academic purgatory. I quickly learned that lower-division TAs were left completely on their own and had little training or interest in teaching elementary French. I immediately banned English from the classrooms and initiated a series of bi-weekly meetings for Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) in a given course. The sessions focused on the general tenets of language acquisition, the various methods then in practice, and the advantages of our approach. In each meeting we answered the following questions:

- What do your students know so far?
- What do we want to introduce, drill, explain, and verify?
- How do we approach new material based on what we have done so far?
- Why do it this way? Is there a better way?
- What type of exercise could we devise to ascertain that students understand and use a specific structure spontaneously in harmony with the materials acquired previously, and in the context of meaningful practice?

To better demonstrate the new techniques, I began teaching a pilot French I and French II section personally and invited GSIs to attend. Further, we established a visitation procedure still in existence. Each TA receives at least two visitors, another faculty member and myself. Each visit is followed by a discussion. Periodically we use video services to tape a particular class and comment on it in a playback session with all the GSIs of a given course. In a similar vein, we produced a film in 1972 demonstrating our methodology. To our delight, the film has been shown at campuses throughout the country.

The increased training initially created workload problems for the GSIs. We resolved this situation by incorporating meetings, observation of demonstration classes, and other learning activities into a methodology course granting units. This allowed GSIs to satisfy their study list requirement while they devoted twenty hours per week to their teacher-training, teaching, and preparation.

Within a few short years *The Slate* celebrated the "excellence of the French TAs and the French lower-division program." Enrollments, which had been decreasing, swelled. Even with the elimination of the language requirement in 1970, our enrollments were maintained and began to rise again. In 1965, the department enrolled between 35 and 40 TAs. Today that number is close to 70. Each TA teaches a section of no more than twenty-five students and the total lower-division enrollment stands between 1500 and 1750 students.

While numbers alone do not prove the validity of our accomplishments in language teaching, they indicate to what extent we held back the tide, or, more precisely, the withdrawing tide. Our lower-division program in French never suffered the throes of declining enrollment or interest, as was generally the case in foreign languages throughout American universities in the 1970s. This unfortunate phenomenon was most often blamed on abandoning language requirements, but much of the fault also lay with faculty methodology and improperly prepared language teachers. Today, teacher-training is taken more seriously at the university level and second language acquisition has become a more sophisticated discipline than it was twenty years ago. Curriculum guidelines for foreign language, at both the secondary and college levels everywhere, now clamor — with the support and approval of nearly the entire profession — for both communicative competency and demonstrable oral proficiency. We appear to have been twenty years ahead in this department since communicative oral competency, and, hence proficiency, have always been the mainstay of our program. Our Graduate Student Instructors, for two decades, have wanted to demonstrate for themselves what they see demonstrated in classes taught by master teachers, namely, that American college students not only are eminently capable of attaining proficiency in a foreign language but they can immensely enjoy the entire learning process leading to that satisfaction.

Tips For Faculty

Efforts by individual faculty members can improve the quality of graduate student instruction and can benefit the Graduate Student Instructor (GSI), the undergraduate and the faculty. The suggestions that follow can be readily implemented and are aimed at encouraging greater faculty interactions with GSIs in the preparation for and actual teaching of specific courses.

- Set up a meeting to discuss the course and the GSIs' role thoroughly before the semester begins (covering such topics as procedures, responsibilities, grading, and best ways of spending time in sections).
- Give GSIs a copy of the course syllabus and readings at least a week before class begins.
- Recommend additional readings on course topics unfamiliar to GSIs.
- Get GSIs together with those who have taught the course in previous years, so that new GSIs can benefit from the experience of their predecessors regarding best ways of spending time in sections, chief problems students may experience, ways of stimulating discussion, and so on.
- Require GSIs to attend course lectures regularly, so that GSIs know what material has been covered and how.
- Schedule faculty member's own office hours at different times than the GSIs' in order to maximize students' opportunities to consult with course staff.
- Ask GSIs to give instructors brief weekly written reports on any problems the students may be having in the course (e.g., "List the 2 things that caused students the most difficulty in class last week").
- Get together with GSIs regularly to discuss how the course is going.
- Get together with GSIs to design course assignments and exams and to develop common criteria for grading.
- Review a sample of GSIs' comments and/or grades on at least the first set of essays, problem sets, quizzes or lab reports.
- Inform GSIs about campus resources for referring students who need tutorial assistance, advice, or counsel beyond that which the GSI is qualified to give.
- Arrange for GSIs to be evaluated by their students (midsemester and at the end of the semester) and discuss the results of these evaluations in ways that will help the GSIs improve their teaching.
- Visit GSI sections at least once during the term and talk with each GSI constructively about his/her strengths and weaknesses.
- Set up a schedule of classroom visits so that each GSI is visited by two other GSIs, so that they may give each other constructive criticism and "tips" for improving specific aspects of their teaching. (The Office of Educational Development has guidelines for classroom visits.)
- Contact the Office of Educational Television and Radio to arrange to have someone talk to the GSIs about the opportunities for having their sections videotaped to give them additional feedback on their teaching (contact Ann Juell at 2-2535).
- Inform GSIs of other resources (such as those listed in this issue of *Teaching at Berkeley*) to help them improve their teaching.

Photo by Danielle Spellman

History Professor James Kettner and graduate student pore over undergraduate bluebooks

TAs Mark Time: History Examines Age-Old Grading Problem

James Kettner, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR
HISTORY

As teaching assistants and readers, graduate students often have major responsibility for grading student work. Grades are an integral part of undergraduate students' educational experiences (perhaps more important than we would like) and can be a gauge as to how students are responding to the course. For these reasons, it is important that the instructor and the TA/reader communicate regularly and effectively on the subject of grading. This can minimize any inconsistencies in the grading procedures and keep both faculty and graduate students apprised of the extent to which students are understanding the material.

In my own courses, graduate students are responsible for grading essay exams and take-home papers (under my supervision) and thus must be able to assess each student's argument and presentation. I advise TAs to comment briefly, objectively, and impersonally in the margins of the essay and to make a short general statement at the end: e.g., "this shows that you have mastered a lot of information, but you have not quite responded to the questions"; or, "your argument is convincing but the essay could have been more effectively organized and supported with more specific evidence." This helps explain the basis of the grade to the students and will be useful later (to professors and TAs alike) if the student wishes to discuss the examination or assignment. The TA might identify the "best" response to each exam question so that copies can be retained to show other students.

I also provide my TAs with the following framework to help them determine the letter grades for students' work:

A-range: I like to be pretty conservative with A grades, a little more generous with A-. These essays and papers should be directly responsive to the main issues and the "subtleties" of the question posed. The argument should be clear, logically organized, and supported by well-chosen evidence. Usually it is not difficult to recognize stand-out essays.

B-range: These should also be responsive to the issues, though they may leave out some "obvious" elements or have some weaknesses in evidence or argument. Minor errors of fact, digressions from the topic, skimpiness of evidence, or exclusive reliance on a single lecture or reading will distinguish these from A-range essays.

C-range: These should show some command of the course materials, but they will probably lack focus and include materials not really relevant to the question. Partial treatment of the key issues, lack of organization, all facts and no argument, or all argument and no facts, major errors, etc., will characterize these exams.

D and below: Incoherence, minimal control of evidence, emphasis on ideas irrelevant to the question, etc., will make these as easily identifiable as the A-range essays.

Because paper assignments for my history courses are identical in type to examination questions, I ask TAs to weigh basically the same kinds of elements as on the exams: relevance, organization, and effective support of the argument by specific examples. Because the examinations are written under time pressure, I usually advise the TAs to tolerate some lapses in form (for example, minor spelling or grammatical errors) if they do not seriously compromise the clarity of the argument. I do encourage the TAs to give more weight to such matters in assessing papers.

I have found it useful to review periodically through the semester a sample of TAs' graded papers or exams across sections. This assures that the same standards are consistently being applied. I have also found it useful to meet regularly with TAs regarding their grading practices so that they are informed about my standards and expectations.

Formula Multiplies Foreign GSIs' Language Skills

William Bade, PROFESSOR
MATHEMATICS

Because of its large teaching load, the Department of Mathematics appoints between 110 and 130 teaching assistants each semester. Teaching assistantships are often the only major form of financial support available to our graduate students. To attract the best students from around the world, we must offer these positions to students whom we have not necessarily been able to interview. Inevitably, new Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) arrive in Berkeley who have had inadequate training in spoken English and often cannot be understood by students and cannot understand students' questions. The TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language), with its focus on writing and grammar, is not a reliable guide to oral skills. Consequently, we needed a way to test foreign applicants in speaking skills, as well as a means for improving the spoken English of those already here.

The Test of Spoken English (TSE) of the Educational Testing Service appears to be an appropriate instrument for screening foreign applicants. In 1983 we began requiring the TSE of these students in our department. As we did so, we found we needed to know in a practical sense what a given TSE score means. Under the auspices of a grant from the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors, we selected a group of nine current students (from China, Korea and Poland) known to have problems with spoken English and gave them the TSE in early December 1983. Beginning in January 1984, these students attended a special ten-week course given by the English Language Program at UC Extension. In May 1984, after retaking the TSE, most students scored considerably higher. The experiment has been successful in both establishing criteria for selecting TAs and demonstrating that the oral English skills of foreign TAs can be greatly improved through a carefully designed course of limited duration.

The TSE consists of seven sections, each involving a particular speech activity. These range from reading a printed passage to such tasks as describing a bicycle in as much detail as possible. The examinee's responses are recorded on tape which is sent to Princeton for grading. Each response is given a rating on comprehensibility, pronunciation, grammar and fluency. Averages are computed, and an overall comprehensibility score is derived which ranges from 0 to 300. In addition, special diagnostic scores are provided for the different qualities of speech. Applicants can take the TSE, along with the TOEFL, at test centers throughout the world. The cost is $40 per test, and reports are sent directly to institutions.

In our first year of requiring the TSE of foreign TA applicants we asked for a score of 250. As a result of our experience I believe that standard was too high. Applicants with a score of at least 220 should be considered. Moreover, it seems wrong to establish rigid cutoff scores. Other factors must be weighed.

I believe that Mathematics is the first department on this campus to use the TSE. However, it is being used widely in this country. At least 50 universities now require or recommend TSE scores for TA applicants.

Looking toward a possible program for our campus, we should not only require the TSE of incoming foreign Graduate Student Instructors, but should also provide a remedial program of English instruction in which students have partial responsibilities for the costs. Classes should consist only of graduate students who are currently teaching or who are preparing to teach.

As part of an overall program, a means of testing English proficiency on campus will be necessary. The TSE Program offers the Speaking Proficiency English Assessment Kit (SPEAK) for direct purchase by university-affiliated English language institutes. The kit uses retired tests from the TSE international program. With the kit comes a self-instructional training manual that explains how to administer the test. It might be possible for the campus to designate a unit to test students with SPEAK for the benefit of all departments.

Judging by the Math department's success with the TSE and related ESL course, I would encourage other departments that rely extensively on foreign GSIs to adopt, or experiment with, similar measures.

Tips For Departments

The following guidelines can be implemented at the departmental level to improve the selection, training and evaluation of Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs).

- Assign an individual or committee with primary responsibility for matters related to the appointment, training and supervision of graduate student teachers.
- Develop formal policy statements on the rights and responsibilities of GSIs and on procedures for appointing and reappointing graduate student teachers.
- Appoint and reappoint GSIs on the basis of command of both spoken and written English, command of the subject matter and potential or demonstrated teaching ability.
- Develop a plan for training GSIs. Involve both faculty and GSIs in the process to assure that the needs of GSIs, faculty and undergraduates will be met.
- Make apprentice teaching opportunities available to graduate students regardless of career goals if possible and practical.
- Provide critical feedback to the novice teaching assistant throughout his or her first semester.
- Provide orientations for new GSIs before they undertake their duties, discussing roles, responsibilities and other issues related to being a TA.
- Use campus-wide training activities to supplement (but not replace) departmental training efforts.
- Capitalize on experienced GSIs by informally involving them with new GSIs in "buddy pairings," in small group discussions, or through written legacies.
- Use centralized training and resources to increase GSI sensitivity to the classroom climate and the conditions and needs of minority students and disabled students.
- Arrange for apprentice teachers to receive feedback about their teaching (from student questionnaires, videotape, or observations by peers, head TAs, or faculty members) during the middle of their first teaching term, in the spirit of improvement.
- Formally evaluate new and experienced GSIs at the end of a semester through student questionnaires and observations by a faculty member or TA coordinator.
- If appropriate, appoint a "Master TA" with clearly defined duties, status and pay, who coordinates GSI activities for large courses with many sections, conducts demonstration classes or orientation sessions for new GSIs, observes and monitors GSI performance and, in general, provides a liaison between GSIs and faculty.
- In departments with large numbers of GSIs, offer 300-level courses aimed at demonstrating and perfecting teaching skills.
- Initiate a series of workshops or colloquia on teaching to which GSIs as well as faculty are invited.
- Identify procedures for GSI training so that it is not solely dependent upon the efforts of a single individual.

Tips for GSIs

Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) can influence their own teaching experiences through a variety of methods designed to enhance and develop teaching skills. The following are a few helpful suggestions for GSIs:

- Initiate meetings with those who have been GSIs for the course in previous years in order to benefit from their experiences regarding the best ways of spending time in sections, chief problems students may encounter, ways of stimulating discussion, etc.
- Talk with the faculty member about the problems that arise in teaching and ask for "tips" on how to handle difficulties.
- Attend course lectures, whether required or not, to know what material has been covered, be better prepared in sections to fill gaps, correct misunderstandings, etc.
- Keep a brief record of what works and what doesn't (e.g., with assignments); this will provide a guide for making changes in the next offering of the course.
- Ask the faculty member to review comments and/or grades on at least the first set of essays, problem sets, quizzes or lab reports, and discuss with the faculty member criteria for grading and the best ways to give students feedback.
- Identify students having difficulty in the course and give individual help where possible, referring more difficult problems to the instructor.
- Ask the faculty member to visit sections at least once during the term to evaluate strengths and weaknesses and to make suggestions for improvement.
- Contact the Office of Educational Television and Radio to arrange to have a class videotaped to get additional feedback on teaching (the person to contact is Ann Juell at 642-2535).
- Ask the department to recommend other resources to help improve teaching, e.g., departmental orientations, workshop/colloquia, 300 courses, the Graduate Assembly, other campus units, GSI handbooks, and journals concerned with teaching.

Resources For Foreign GSIs

Foreign GSIs can turn to a number of campus courses and resources to improve their oral fluency and skills in teaching American students. These include:

- Subject A for Non-Native Speakers of English
  216 Dwinelle Annex
  Contact: June McKay, 2-5975

Two courses devoted to spoken English are offered — Subject A 35A and Subject A 35B. Both classes, which provide 2 units for study list filing and 0 units toward graduation, meet for three 1-hour lecture/discussion classes and one 1-hour language lab per week. The courses cover English pronunciation, oral comprehension, and fluency. Although both are undergraduate courses, graduate students have enrolled in the past. 35A meets in fall and spring semesters; 35B meets only in the spring.

- UC Extension
  2223 Fulton Street (Berkeley)
  Contact: Tony Vigo or Ellen Rosenfield, 2-9833

Several courses — some meeting for as little as five weeks and some for an entire semester — train interested students, GSIs and faculty in oral English skills. UC Extension charges a fee for all classes (ranging from $270 to $1000), and offers courses in both Berkeley and San Francisco. Courses focus on various aspects of English communication, including idiomatic expressions, accent improvement, and listening skills. In addition, UC Extension will tailor courses to the needs of departments or groups and offer instruction on-site. GSIs, who have been referred by a faculty member, may sometimes be provided complimentary enrollments in the Berkeley classes on a space-available basis.

- Language Laboratory
  B-50 Dwinelle
  Contact: Victoria Williams, 2-0767

The Language Lab has a variety of self-study tapes for speakers whose first language is not English. The tapes vary in length and difficulty, and are most useful in conjunction with tutoring so that students can receive feedback on their progress. The Lab's hours are Monday-Thursday, 8am-6pm; Friday, 8am-5pm; and Saturday, 10am-2pm.

- *Handbook for Foreign TAs*
  Graduate Assembly
  Anthony Hall
  Contact: TA Training Project, 2-2877

The Graduate Assembly has compiled a handbook for foreign TAs containing information on teaching American students. Also included is a listing of tutoring and other resources for foreign born TAs interested in improving their spoken English.

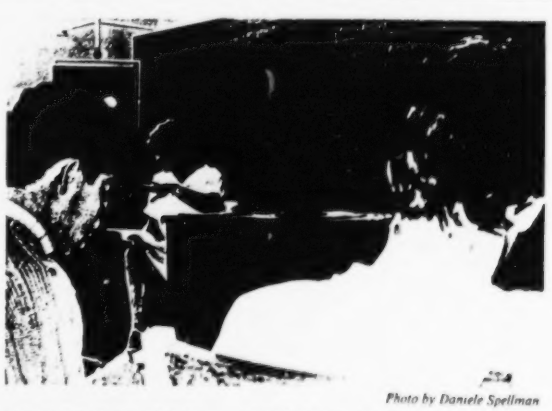

Photo by Daniele Spellman

Foreign GSIs improve their language skills in Subject A class for non-native speakers of English

Courses And Seminars

A to Z For GSIs

Jon Wagner, COORDINATOR
PROFESSIONAL and COMMUNITY SERVICES
GRADUATE SCHOOL of EDUCATION

Does experience in preparing students to teach in surrounding schools suggest strategies for better preparing graduate students to teach in this "school" (UC Berkeley)? Several of us in the Graduate School of Education thought that it might, and a preliminary assessment of the course we designed with this in mind — Education 380: Professional Training for Teaching Assistants — encourages us to think that we were right.

Education 380 itself has been on the books for some time. Formerly it was used by individual faculty members to train teaching assistants who worked with them directly. However, during this past academic year — with support from a grant from the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors — we revised this course to serve as a more general "practicum," for graduate students from across the campus who work in "language intensive subject areas," such as the social sciences and humanities.

Our revisions were guided by three assumptions. First, that courses for which undergraduate students must do a great deal of reading and writing generate a characteristic set of teaching challenges, regardless of the academic departments involved. Second, that teaching assistants could confront these challenges with more imagination and success if they enrolled concurrently in a formal course which required them to observe, describe, and reflect upon their own teaching practice. And third, that the structure of a graduate "practicum" was a reasonable way to guide teaching assistants through this process and bring them into greater contact with the wealth of teaching expertise present on the Berkeley campus.

The course we designed met as a seminar once a week for 90 minutes. Students were assigned articles and books which described a variety of effective teaching techniques, analyzed issues (such as writing conventions in different academic disciplines), or examined the special role played by graduate students in college-level instruction. Students were also given several "field assignments" through which they observed other classes and analyzed their own repertoire of teaching practices.

Class sessions were used for three related purposes: to discuss each graduate student's current teaching assignment in terms of issues addressed by the practicum, to review field assignments and course readings, and as "workshops" through which students could develop new teaching strategies and techniques.

The "field assignments" required students to observe other University teachers at work and were guided by a set of questions about teaching practices, the "shape" of the class session, student participation, etc. For their first observation Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) selected courses within their own major field. While this was valuable in some respects, they found the subject matter itself to be so interesting that they had a hard time paying attention to the pedagogic structure of the class. In their second "field assignment," the GSIs were asked to observe a teacher in a subject area quite removed from their own. In terms of classroom analysis, this assignment was far more successful and generated some extremely valuable insights into how class sessions can be organized and taught.

To conduct the "workshop" sessions, technical consultants were recruited from the Subject A Program, the Office of Educational Development, and the Student Learning Center. For example, Steve Tollefson (Subject A) came for two sessions to discuss strategies and techniques for "marking student papers" and "assigning productive essay topics." At another session, Barbara Davis (Office of Educational Development) demonstrated useful techniques for conducting mid-term course evaluations. Workshop sessions were also scheduled with Mike Hardie (Student Learning Center) on "when to intervene in the writing process," and with Gordon Cox (Student Learning Center) on "learning from text." Robbie Cohen (The Graduate Assembly) also came for one session to discuss the "professionalization" of teaching assistants.

GSIs enrolled in the course were encouraged to apply techniques acquired through workshops and field observations to their own teaching assignments. They were also encouraged to think through pedagogical concepts and assumptions behind their teaching practices and behind the new strategies with which they were becoming familiar through the course. Additional discussion and review were scheduled for subsequent class meetings. This "back-and-forth" structure of the class encouraged students to constantly examine the interrelationship between educational theory and teaching practice.

One of the more stimulating aspects of the course — for both students and the instructor — emerged from examining teaching issues across the different departments represented (English, Anthropology, Political Science etc.). The variety of subject areas was especially evident during the last two weeks of the term, when each student presented within the practicum itself a lesson developed through his or her own subject area teaching assignment. Analysis of these presentations revealed a variety of teaching approaches, each of which could be effective in its own right, an extremely valuable lesson for the developing teacher.

Student response to the course was quite positive. Those enrolled reported that the practicum sessions were both stimulating and directly applicable to their teaching assignments. They found the "workshop" sessions to be particularly valuable and reported much the same about their field assignments.

At the beginning of the semester, students were asked to identify the four or five most important challenges to be faced in their teaching assignments that term. At the end of the course, when asked to reassess this list, they reported either that they had moved beyond these challenges or that they had come to see them as structural elements of teaching which would require their continued attention. It was a pleasure to note that they all expressed increased confidence in their ability to teach, and, more importantly, in their ability *to learn from their own teaching experience*.

> "As one person put it, 'I've learned to treat the classroom situation as theatre...in which a lot is going on, only some of which I can directly control...and to enjoy it more.' "
>
> **Jon Wagner,** *Coordinator, School of Education*

As the principal instructor and architect for this course, I approached it with about equal amounts of curiosity and commitment. For whatever reason, in the space of the semester, the graduate students seemed to move to a similar position in terms of their own teaching. As one person put it, "I've learned to treat the classroom situation as theater . . . in which a lot is going on, only some of which I can directly control. . . and to enjoy it more."

I don't know her students, but I'm willing to bet that as she gets greater rewards from her teaching, they will too. That's a good reason to try something like this, at least once. The fact that it might be working is a good reason to try again. We'll be offering this course again in fall 1985 and spring 1986, and we will be developing a similar course for Graduate Student Instructors working in areas that require demanding quantitative assignments of undergraduate students.

TA Training Program Engineered For Success

F.C. Hurlbut, PROFESSOR
VICE-CHAIR for INSTRUCTION
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Approximately five years ago, the Department of Mechanical Engineering instituted a seminar for teaching assistants entitled the "Teaching of Mechanical Engineering at the University Level." Generally managed by the two department Vice Chairmen, the course is currently taught by Professor Dan Mote, Vice Chairman for Graduate Studies, and myself. After four terms of shared participation, I have identified three central goals which direct our approach.

Our first goal is to introduce the teaching assistants to the broad array of components essential to the teaching experience. This is particularly important since TAs in our department do not give formal lectures where new material is developed and do not prepare or read final examinations. Nevertheless, the TAs do lead discussions and manage laboratory sections. In doing so, they shed new light on troublesome concepts and analyses. In order to serve the instructor and their students well, the TAs must become familiar with the various aspects of their craft. Consequently in our seminar we specifically address the appropriate character of homework, how to deal with examinations and grading, as well as finals and term projects.

Providing a forum for discussion of educational policy and issues of importance to TAs as instructors and as graduate students has been our second goal. We have found it useful to stimulate such discussion in light of ongoing faculty concern and the more immediate TA concerns. Accordingly, seminar participants discuss such topics as the preliminary exam process, exploring various degree programs and investigating parameters for dissertations and theses.

Our third interest has been to provide a time and place for focused, but often unplanned, frank expressions of opinion. Both Professor Mote and I have profited substantially from student views of department policies and educational needs, while the students have also gained new insights and developed new perspectives.

One particularly unusual and successful aspect of the seminar is our team approach. Class members are organized into teams of three or four. Each team develops position paper listing positive and negative aspects of such topics as formal discussion sections versus individual counseling. A presentation is made by one team member, the ensuing discussion is chaired by a second member and a five minute wrap-up is given by a third team member. A one-page summary is prepared and submitted two weeks later. In our experience, the discussion is lively and wide-ranging.

Addressing the three major concerns for TA training with this team approach has made "Teaching Mechanical Engineering At The University Level" a particularly useful and valuable tool for TAs in our department.

Scandinavian Seminar: Scenes From TA Training

John Lindow, PROFESSOR
SCANDINAVIAN
Marianne Stolen, VISITING LECTURER
SCANDINAVIAN

The Scandinavian Department faces an unusual problem in that it offers instruction in three foreign languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish) at the beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels, often without multiple sections, and with a relatively small graduate student population to draw on for teachers. Although the languages are closely related, textbooks never are, so coordinating instruction in the three languages is difficult. Indeed, it is only in recent years that coordination across languages has been attempted, and 1984-85 was the first year in which a language coordinator was added to the staff. Her duties include, besides formal supervision of all undergraduate language instruction in the department, the teaching of a pedagogical seminar (Scandinavian 300).

All teaching assistants — ordinarily between 6 and 9 — enroll in Scandinavian 300 which meets twice a week. The first class meeting of the week is devoted to presentation of pedagogical theory and practice. The second is open for discussion. The small size of the group and similarities of the languages to be taught make it possible to anticipate and deal with many of the common problems new and even experienced Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs) in our department face. At the beginning of the term, the course attempts to develop a teaching plan covering the first two weeks of the semester to meet essential educational and social needs of the students.

Of special importance throughout the term is the devising of language function sheets which focus on typical formulaic expressions for expressing functions such as greeting, leave-taking, introduction of self and others, asking for opinions, expressing like and dislike, and so forth. We also try to equip TAs with the skills necessary to make optimal use of these materials, including the social skills necessary to promote a classroom atmosphere conducive to relaxed and informal interaction among the students, and teaching skills stressing meaningful communication rather than repetitive drills.

Finally, this training process for TAs has enabled us to construct and accumulate a file of useful supplementary audio and video teaching materials. These resources allow TAs to see and hear specific instructional methods and their impact on students.

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Photo by Danielle Spellman

Video camera eyes GSI and her class; the Office of Educational Television and Radio provides a free videotaping service for instructors who wish to analyze their teaching

GSIs Psyched For Training

Donald Riley, PROFESSOR
PSYCHOLOGY

For the past several years, the Psychology Department has offered a required training course for all new Graduate Student Instructors (GSIs). The course is organized and overseen by two faculty members, but the primary responsibility for the week-to-week activities is in the hands of a senior graduate student with extensive experience as a teaching assistant. In previous years the seminar has run approximately 12 weeks with the last part of the semester given over to the videotaping of GSI performances and feedback.

During the seminar portion of the course, a range of topics are discussed including such issues as: what to do in the first class meeting; how to get participation from students in discussion sections; how to evaluate student performance; teaching styles and strategies; pros and cons of the lecturing method; problems and principles of examination giving; use of campus facilities as aids to good teaching; and ethical issues that arise in teaching.

Our experience with this course has led us to several conclusions. First, one of the most important aspects of the seminar is that it provides a support group for individuals during their first teaching experience. The GSIs benefit greatly from having a forum in which to discuss their problems and to share solutions. It is probably appropriate that no member of the faculty be present during these discussions.

Second, perhaps equally important is that new Graduate Student Instructors can gain a perspective on varieties of expectations and approaches to teaching. Throughout successive weeks, the GSIs in the course meet with faculty members who discuss their views on good teaching and what they try to do, and then with undergraduates who describe what they look for in good instructors and GSIs. These kinds of discussions make clear that there is no single answer to the question of good teaching and simultaneously fulfill the GSI's role as an intermediary between the students and the faculty.

Third, the course is more valuable when the GSI participants are concurrently teaching their own sections. Those who take the course in the fall but do not teach until the spring benefit less. This is primarily because new GSIs who are also new students must learn many things about time management: how to be a GSI, a student, and a researcher all at the same time.

Fourth, the videotaping and feedback has, in our experience, been more negative than positive in its effect. New GSIs find it threatening and rather unnerving. Video feedback may be a more appropriate technique after a GSI has some experience and feels reasonably secure. While the potential value of videotaping and feedback is undeniable, the manner in which it is introduced and how it is used is of special importance. There are some interesting alternatives to videotaping. We sometimes provide tape simulations of teaching with feedback from an informed critic. GSIs are encouraged to visit other classes and sections with observation checklists so that the GSI can think critically about what works and what doesn't.

During the coming year we will offer the seminar both in the fall and spring semesters. Having omitted the videotape process and drawing from our experience, we have concluded that the course is most effectively taught in seven or eight weeks. New GSIs teaching for the first time that semester will be required to take the seminar. We have been pleased with our training course and GSIs have commented on its value and effectiveness.

Slavic 301: Video Nyetworking Helps TAs

Henryka Yakushev, LECTURER
SLAVIC LANGUAGES AND LITERATURE

Approximately 500 students enroll in first and second year Russian language classes each year, receiving instruction from 12 or 13 teaching assistants. In essence these graduate students are not assistants at all. From the first day of teaching they have complete responsibility for a class and are expected to perform their teaching duties as best as possible. Yet prior to starting their assignments, there is rarely a single Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) who has taught before; most of them have never even stood in front of a class. In view of this, the Slavic Department considers the teaching assistantship as a kind of apprenticeship and provides the TAs with a carefully designed training program which consists of:

- a pre-semester workshop, held during the last week of summer vacation;
- the seminar practicum, Slavic Teaching Methods, which provides the TAs with continued supervision.

This seminar practicum, Slavic 301 — Teaching Methodology in Russian Instruction, is required for all first time TAs as well as those assigned to a new level of instruction. During weekly meetings with the instructor, GSIs discuss such topics as practical teaching methods, design of supplementary course materials, use of the language laboratory, coordination with other discussion sections, and any other pertinent subject. The Graduate Student Instructors are given continued guidance and support through our department's 300-level training seminar.

Videotaping plays a substantial role in both parts of the GSIs' training. As their supervisor, I first used videotapes as an educational tool in 1983. At the beginning of each semester, all GSIs are videotaped teaching the same lesson within each level of instruction, so that interpeer comparisons of their performance can be readily made. The videotaping is prearranged and covers the entire classroom hour. A professional camera operator from the Office of Educational Television and Radio tapes the session, focusing on the students as well as the GSIs. Following this procedure the TA views the tape alone and I, as the TA supervisor, also view it privately. Then we meet for a confidential discussion.

At this meeting the GSIs themselves often comment perceptively about their instructional methods in the videotaped lesson. The tape plays the role of a magnifying glass for the GSIs who tend to be more critical of their own performances than any other observer would be. Thus, the supervisor has the task of helping the Graduate Student Instructor separate significant problems from things which have little to do with being an effective teacher and giving the GSI some constructive suggestions for correcting real weaknesses.

I have noticed that for some Graduate Student Instructors the first videotaping session seems a painful experience, but the confidentiality of the viewing and supportive individual discussion seems to change their attitudes. GSIs often approach the second taping, held several weeks after the first, more favorably, paying less attention to their physical appearance and the minor details of their performance. Repeated videotaping throughout the semester allows the GSIs to try new techniques and to see the changes in their teaching behavior over time.

Keeping these tapes for more than one year allows us to demonstrate concrete evidence of GSI progress during their teaching career. The preservation of these tapes has been made possible by a grant from the Committee on Graduate Student Instructors allowing us to purchase a set of our own videotapes which we may keep and use again as needed. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Grant received from the Center for Slavic and East European Studies has enabled the Slavic Department to acquire equipment for viewing videotapes.

Besides the immediate benefits for the GSIs, the videotapes can become a permanent tool for the training of teachers. By editing and compiling tapes of classes conducted during the previous academic years, I am preparing a wide variety of specialized "model videotapes" and organizing them into a reference video library. The library will be composed of tapes which demonstrate different methodological aspects of teaching. Having before them a model videotape illustrating various teaching strategies dealing with one teaching topic, the GSIs will be able to choose those techniques that appeal to their personal temperaments and ways of teaching. The benefit of such model videotapes is that the Graduate Student Instructors have a source to refer to and an opportunity to see both a technique and a topic put into practice.

Videotapes have been a tremendous asset for the Slavic Department. They have proven to be a useful and versatile tool in both the short-term and long-term training of Russian language teachers.

> "The tape plays the role of a magnifying glass for the GSIs who tend to be more critical of their own performance than any other observer would be."
>
> **Henryka Yakushev,** *Lecturer, Slavic Languages*

Tune In: Tips For Viewing Videotape

Videotape evaluation can be a useful way to improve one's teaching effectiveness. Graduate Student Instructors, or faculty members, can arrange for a professional camera operator to videotape a portion of their class. The Office of Educational Television and Radio (2-2535) provides this videotaping service, at no charge, to all UCB departments during the hours of 8 to 5, Monday through Friday.

When arranging the videotaping process, it is important to consider the following:

- which 15-30 minute section of the class will be videotaped (beginning, middle, end);
- where the camera should be focused (on students, on the instructor or on both);
- informing students beforehand that the class will be taped.

Viewing and analyzing a videotape of classroom work can be quite rewarding, but it can also be extremely challenging. Many people see things they do not like about themselves, especially in terms of physical appearance (e.g., weight, posture, mannerisms). Keep in mind that these are exaggerated on tape, are less noticeable and distracting in real life, and, in any case, have little or nothing to do with being an effective teacher. A quick review of a short segment of the tape (5-10 minutes) soon after the videotaping process can help instructors confront some of their initial qualms about viewing themselves on tape.

After this initial review, the instructor should view the tape again all the way through, focusing on the following questions:

- how prepared was the instructor?
- did the instructor explain things clearly?
- was classtime used effectively?
- what was the nature of the interactions between the instructor and students?
- did students seem interested in the material and the instructor?
- was the physical layout of the classroom conducive to learning?
- to what extent did students participate in discussions?
- how effective were the instructor's questions?
- in what ways could the class be improved?

In order to view the class in an objective manner, consider these topics as though observing someone else's teaching.

Arranging for and evaluating a second videotape later during the semester can allow the instructor to focus specifically on improvement. During the second viewing, look for:

- aspects of teaching which have improved;
- new teaching strategies which have been implemented.

The Office of Educational Development (2-6392) will provide faculty and GSIs with evaluation forms and advice for videotape viewing.

The campus also houses videotape libraries with pertinent materials for graduate student instruction. The Office of Educational Television and Radio has a videotape collection of GSIs and faculty members teaching in various disciplines. These can be viewed individually or used as part of a departmental TA training program. In addition ETR has a series of fifteen-minute tapes produced by UCLA on aspects of effective teaching.

Grants to Improve Teaching and Learning

Academic Senate

Council on Educational Development

GRANTS AWARDED FOR 1985
CED Instructional Improvement Grants

Svetlana Alpers, History of Art: Purchasing a computer to prepare and update slide lists for lecture groups.

Ali Tosun Aricanli, Development Studies: Developing a new course and audiovisual materials in Development Studies: Land, Labor and Work in the Third World.

G. S. Biging, Forestry & Resource Management: Developing a new sophomore course in computer programming and applications.

Peter Bosselmann, City & Regional Planning: Improving the design and organization of case studies for IDS 241: The Urban Environment.

William Bruvold, Meredith Minkler, Clarence Spigner & Henrik Blum, SAHS: Developing a new course: Racial and Ethnic Dimensions in Health and Medical Delivery Care.

David Collier, Political Science: Redesigning Political Science 3, a lower-division course on research methods.

Alan S. Foss, Chemical Engineering: Programming computer simulations and converting computer process control for Chemical Engineering 172: Dynamics and Control of Chemical Processes.

Paul Gersper, Plant & Soil Biology: Developing audiovisual modules of Northern California land use examples and expanding audiovisual tutorial station.

Arthur Gill, EECS: Updating software, hardware and manuals for Computer Science 55.

Keith Gilless, Forestry & Resource Management: Restructuring and developing computer-based assignments for Forestry 110: Forest and Wildland Economics.

Robert Glaeser, Biology: Producing a teaching slide collection for Biology 1B laboratories.

John J. Gumperz, Anthropology: Adding a computer-assisted laboratory for qualitative analysis of ethnographic field data.

F. A. Hammel, Anthropology: Developing a new course in anthropological demography and refining existing bibliography.

Anthony Haymet, Chemistry: Computerizing homework problem sets for thermodynamics and statistical mechanics.

Leon Henkin, Mathematics and **Steven Chin**, SESAME: Creating a computer graphics library for chemistry and calculus instruction in the Professional Development Program.

William Jolly, Chemistry: Producing videotapes of general laboratory procedures for freshman chemistry.

Ira M. Lapidus, History: Developing a reader and slides on Islamic and Middle Eastern history.

June McKay & Meredith Pike-Baky, Subject A: Summer language training for foreign TAs.

Sheldon Margen, Public Health: Providing a two-day workshop for faculty and students to review curriculum development for Public Health nutrition courses.

Henry Miller, Social Welfare: Developing and purchasing software for instruction in social welfare.

Carolyn Porter, Women's Studies and **Terry Strathman**, Sociology: Expanding videotape collection for Women's Studies media library.

Graham Powell, Civil Engineering: Developing a new course in computer-aided structural engineering design.

John Ratcliffe, SAHS and **Stephen Blum**, Education: Establishing a health and medical apprenticeship program.

Doris Sloan, Environmental Sciences: Developing a reader along with TA training workshops for Environmental Science 10.

Rodney Sobey, Civil Engineering: Developing instructional microcomputer software for experimental graduate course Civil Engineering 291A: Numerical Methods in Hydraulic and Coastal Engineering.

Eleanor Swift, Law: Developing and designing teaching materials for academic and skills law course: Evidence Advocacy.

Ronald Takaki & Larry Hajime, Asian-American Studies: The Ethnic Studies research and publications project: establishing the faculty/student research group.

Clark Thompson, EECS: Developing software for undergraduate microprocessor laboratory, Computer Sciences 154.

Bonnie Wade, Music: Providing for the department's performance program.

Marvalee Wake, Zoology: Organizing and creating a catalogue of the zoology teaching collection.

Committee on Graduate Student Instructors

GRANTS AWARDED FOR 1985-86
GSI Training Grants

Milton Azevedo, Spanish & Portuguese: Course leaders for lower division Spanish course. Pre-service orientation session for new TAs.

Michael Burawoy, Sociology: Orientation workshops and seminars for TAs.

Jack Citrin & Christine Schaefer, Political Science: Workshops, a handbook and evaluation procedures for TAs.

Bobby Cohen, Graduate Assembly: Orientation conference, workshops, handbook and newsletter for TAs. A handbook for foreign TAs.

Marjorie Fultens, Carolyn Hoover & Lee Terminello, Chemistry: Orientation, workshops and Master TA for lower division chemistry TAs.

Bernard Gifford, Education: 300-level course for TAs in the social sciences, humanities and professional schools.

Gerard Jiun, French: New standardized comprehensive tests to be administered by TAs in their sections.

June McKay & Meredith Pike-Baky, Subject A: Language training for foreign TAs.

Joseph Milick, German: Orientation workshop and seminars for TAs.

Donald Riley, Psychology: Eight-week seminar for new TAs.

Robert Robichaux, Botany: Manuals for TAs and Master TAs.

Marianne Stolen, Scandinavian: Resource file for TAs.

Laura D'Andrea Tyson, Economics: Handbook, workshops and evaluation procedures for TAs.

Henryka Yakusher, Slavic Languages: Three-day orientation workshop for TAs.

CED Instructional Travel Grants

Martin Covington, Psychology: Participating in the International Research Organization: Society for Test Anxiety Research in Dusseldorf, Germany.

Judy Diane Lynch, Journalism: Presenting survey results at the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communications Annual Convention in Memphis, Tennessee.

Katherine Milton, Anthropology: Attending a week long workshop at MIT on the Anthropology of Food and Food Problems.

Committee on Graduate Student Instructors
GSI TRAINING GRANTS DEADLINE

Applications for 1986 are due Friday, April 11, 1986

Written guidelines, applications and consultation are available through the Office of Educational Development 273 Stephens, 642-6392

Committee on Teaching

GRANTS AWARDED FOR 1985
COT Minigrants

Guitty Azarpay & Jeffrey Zorn, Near Eastern Studies: Preparing 300 reproductions for display in Moffitt Library of the art of the ancient Near East from Neolithic times to the fall of the Persian Empire.

Milton Azevedo, Spanish & Portuguese: Developing supplementary oral and written exercises and creative writing materials for Spanish 4: Intermediate Spanish.

Richard Barth, Social Welfare: Purchasing one videotape and producing three others showing clinical practice with victims of family violence.

George Dales & David Stronach, South & Southeast Asian Studies: Producing 100 slides of archaeological and architectural subjects illustrating material developments from Neolithic period through Sassanian period in Iran, Central Asia and India.

Charles Dekker, Biochemistry: Purchasing a projector for Biochemistry 102.

Anthony Dubovsky, Architecture: Purchasing typography equipment for visual studies courses in architecture.

Charles Faulhaber, Spanish & Portuguese: Microfilming manuscripts of the dukes of Fernan Nunez (Spain) for instructional use.

Paul Gersper, Plant & Soil Biology: Creating an audiovisual tutorial workstation for plant and soil biology.

Ormen Granger, Geography: Purchasing software programs for remote sensing and cartography.

Joan Grossman, Irina Gutkin, Olga Astromoff & Henryka Yakusher, Slavic Languages: Preparing a collection of dialogues to be used in first year Russian courses.

John Harte, Energy & Resources: Purchasing NOVA videotape on acid rain for Energy & Resources 102: Quantitative aspects of global environmental problems.

F. C. Howell & Gary Richards, Anthropology: Completing development of a teaching collection of pathologic and anomalously developed skeletons.

Thomas Jorde, Law: Preparing a new course: Innovation and the Law.

Gwen Kirkpatrick, Spanish & Portuguese: Preparing slides and purchasing videotapes on early Latin American history.

Thomas Laqueur, History: Producing 250 slides illustrative of the history of European culture and society, 1500-1945.

Linda Lewis, History: Preparing 500 slides in Brazil related to 19th and 20th century historical themes.

David Lieberman, Law: Developing a new course for legal studies: The Making of Modern Constitutionalism.

Marcia Linn, Education: Administrating and analyzing computer course performance questionnaire for Computer Science 50.

Judy Lynch, Journalism: Developing legal and journalistic materials for media law courses.

Peter Manoleas, Social Welfare: Producing a teaching videotape showing the effects of alcohol and drug advertising on self-image, sense of community, and personal aspirations.

Robert Martin, Forestry: Converting mainframe public domain computer software on wildlife fire science and management for use on IBM-XT microcomputers.

Carolyn Merchant, CRS and **Yaakov Garb**, SESAME: Producing an audiovisual presentation depicting the historical evolution of western culture's perceptions of earth and nature.

Meredith Minkler, Public Health: Developing a new course examining change processes in health behavior at the individual, community, institutional and societal levels.

Dunbar H. Ogden, Dramatic Art: Purchasing a slide collection on theatrical production from the Greek period to the present.

Jean-Pierre Protzen & Horst Rittel, Architecture: Preparing a reader and slides for Architecture 130: Design Theories and Methods.

John Ratcliffe, SAHS and **Stephen Blum**, Education: Supporting efforts to establish a health and medical apprenticeship program.

Hugh Richmond, English: Videotaping performances of Shakespeare and purchasing five Shakespeare films.

K. V. S. Sastry, Materials Science & Mineral Engineering: Developing microcomputer software for teaching mineral and particulate systems.

Gail Schiller, Architecture: Creating classroom experiments to demonstrate principles of thermal science.

Grace Smith & Vasil Diyamandoglu, Near Eastern Studies: Introducing conversational practice and oral presentations for Turkish 1B course; Videotaping Turkish dialogues.

Joseph Svoratek, EECS: Updating course materials for CS 162: Operating Systems and System Programming.

Gregg Thomson, Afro-American Studies: Establishing a computerized bibliography on black women in American society.

Loy Volkman, Entomology: Establishing a slide collection from electron microscope negatives for Biology 120: Introduction to Comparative Virology.

Michael Wiseman, Economics: Conducting an onsite student seminar at Tandem Computer Corporation.

Robert Zucker, Physiology-Anatomy: Developing computer exercises for Physiology 101L: Cellular and Neurological Physiology Laboratory.

Committee on Teaching
OUTSTANDING TEACHING ASSISTANT AND TEACHING ASSOCIATE AWARD
Departmental nominations due: Friday, March 7, 1986

Information about this award program is available from the Office of Educational Development, 273 Stephens Hall, 642-6392

Outstanding TAs Stand Out: Committee Honors Teaching

Recently, the Committee on Teaching (COT) initiated an awards program to recognize the vital contributions made by graduate student instructors to teaching at Berkeley. Through this program, the COT makes available certificates of distinction for presentation to Teaching Assistants and Teaching Associates selected by their departments. In 1984-85, 170 TAs from 45 departments received the Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award.

Recognizing that the criteria for outstanding teaching by graduate student instructors will vary among disciplines, the COT has placed responsibility at the departmental level for selecting the Teaching Assistants and Associates who will receive the award. Some departments charge their departmental committee on teaching or instructional affairs with selecting outstanding graduate student instructors; some units have associated student organizations that select TAs for recognition.

Because excellence in graduate student instruction is often not formally acknowledged or rewarded, the COT wishes to encourage departments to participate in this program. It provides the campus, as well as the department, with a vehicle for expressing appreciation and admiration for excellence in teaching at the graduate student level. All names submitted by March 7, 1986 will be eligible for the 1985-86 awards. Departments or graduate chairs wishing to recognize their outstanding TAs should contact the Office of Educational Development, 273 Stephens (2-6392) for information and guidelines.